

# Breathing Underwater

Breathe in. *Ah!* It feels good when the air fills your lungs inside your chest. Breathing is how you get oxygen, a part of the air that your body needs to live.

Animals that live in the ocean need oxygen, too.

Whales and dolphins are mammals that come to the surface to breathe. They have lungs like you do, but they breathe through a blowhole on top of their heads. When

they dive underwater they hold their breath. They can stay under a long time. When they come back to the surface, they breathe out a big gust of air through their blowholes.

*Ah!*

Fish don't have lungs.  
How do they breathe? How  
do they get oxygen?



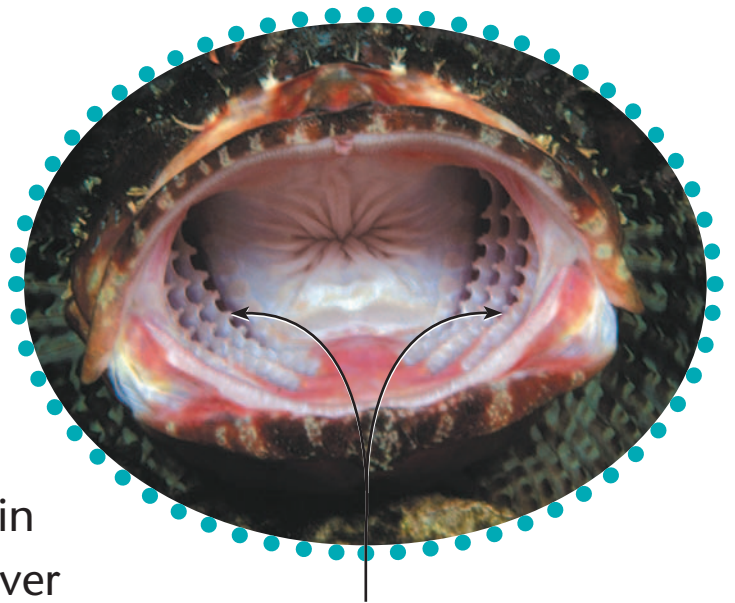
Instead of lungs, fish have gills. A fish breathes by opening and closing its mouth. When it opens its mouth, it lets water in. When it closes its mouth, it pushes the water over its gills.

There's oxygen in water, just as there's oxygen in air. The gills take in the oxygen when the water flows over them. That way the fish can live and breathe underwater.

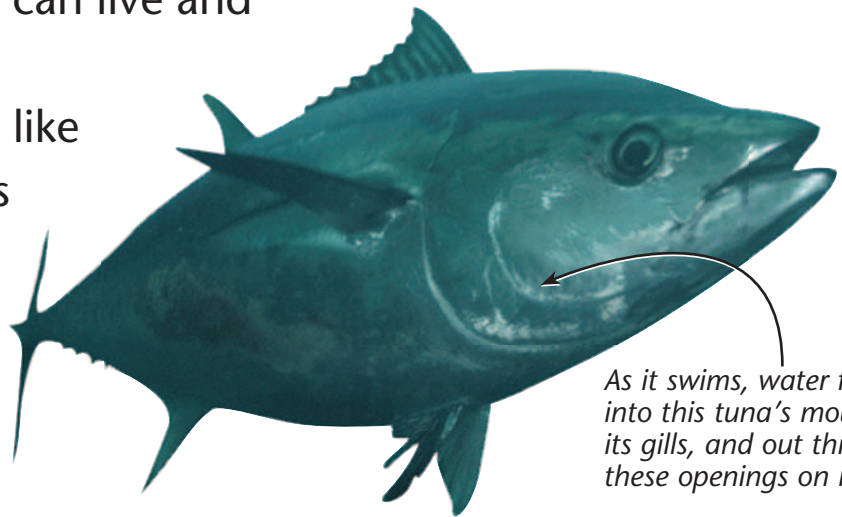
Some big, active fish, like a bluefin tuna, need lots of oxygen. They swim with their mouths open so more water flows over their gills.

Sometimes when you need lots of oxygen, like when you run or play hard, you breathe with your mouth open, too.

# Ah!



*Gills on the inside of a scorpion fish.*



*As it swims, water flows into this tuna's mouth, over its gills, and out through these openings on its side.*



*You can't breathe underwater, so you have to hold your breath.*